

Appalachian folkways

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Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Bauch, N. (2006). Appalachian folkways. *Cultural Geographies*, 13(3), 478-478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147447400601300312>

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colour plates which show exactly how Ernst exploited his fortuitous exposure to the exotic.

ROGER CARDINAL

Appalachian folkways. By John B. Rehder. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2004. 353 pp. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN 0 8018 7879 9.

This work clearly demonstrates the author's long-time personal involvement and fascination with the southern Appalachian region. Readers looking for an encyclopedic, detailed and well-researched account of the cultural traits that make this place unique, sprinkled with Rehder's anecdotes and colourful language, will benefit greatly. For example, he uses the colloquial 'likker' (p. 197) when discussing moonshine in order to showcase and document the folk language, one of many such decisions of his that contribute to the preservation of a time and place.

The work is regional-descriptive in nature, unique in today's cultural geography writing, which generally relies more on systematic analysis. The advantage to this method is that it frees the author to guide the reader through Appalachia, giving an informative, trustworthy and entertaining view of his home. If anyone is in the position properly to understand the stereotypes of this cultural region, Rehder shows, through personal history and careful documentation, that he is the one, and anyone interested specifically in the southern Appalachian region will find the book extremely valuable.

There are two related disadvantages to this framework. One is that it hints at many key geographical ideas, but does little to treat them at a deeper level. Themes such as scale, diaspora and boundaries are implied at various points, but not discussed in the context of a wider geographical literature. Such is not the aim of the book, however, and readers should not expect to find these types of engagement. The second disadvantage is that readers are left to correlate Rehder's precise inventory of folkways such as architecture, food, music, language and belief systems for themselves. These are held together because they supposedly share a particular time and place, yet some of the criteria of significance for selecting what is an 'Appalachian folkway' are not consistent, leaving the reader to wonder how they are related. Given this, the overriding criterion of significance seems to be time. After a certain point in the twentieth century and before a certain point in the nineteenth century, the ways of life in Appalachia are generally not considered 'folk' in this book. This temporal framing seems to be paralleled by European migrations as the beginning point and modern technology as the endpoint, but this is not made explicit in the text. The infrequency of connection, however, does not detract from Rehder's meticulous account of what is often recognized as southern Appalachian culture.

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